



Minutes Desert Conservation Commission Aug. 3, 2021

**Minutes of the Desert Conservation Commission meeting held on August 3, 2021, 3:32 p.m.,
Meeting held via Cisco WebEx Events**

Members Present:

Shereen Lerner – Chair
Kimberly Gaffney-Loza – Vice Chair
Laura Stewart
Donald Burt
Erika Acorn
Aireona Raschke
Jane Neuheisel
Ricardo Juan Leonard

Members Absent:

Brian Farling

City Staff Present:

Craig Hayton, Staff Liaison- Deputy Community Services Director- Parks and Recreation
Tanya Chavez, Senior Management Assistant – Community Services Administration

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Chair Shereen Lerner.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Kimberly Gaffney-Loza to approve the June 29, 2021 meeting minutes.

Seconded: Laura Stewart

Decision: Motion Approved, 8-0

Ayes: Shereen Lerner, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Laura Stewart, Donald Burt, Aireona Raschke, Erika Acorn, Ricardo Juan Leonard and Jane Neuheisel

Nays: n/a

Abstain: n/a

Absent: Brian Farling

Agenda Item 3 – Desert Defenders

Aireona Raschke and Kim Gaffney-Loza presented an update on the work of the Desert Defenders. Desert Defenders is a collaborative program within the region and the city. They train community scientists to identify different plant species that are considered invasive. The point of the training is to

train the citizen scientists and talk about how invasive species can have an impact on our habitats. Community scientists can go out and map the species where they find them. This will give managers an idea of where they are, how they are spreading and how to address the issue. Craig's team has the ability to go into the map and pull down the data from GIS.

Kim spoke about the work mapping invasive plants she had done in the Tempe preserves. Several Master Naturalist volunteers helped with the mapping in the Lo Piano area. Kim mapped Hayden Butte Preserve and the remaining Papago Park Preserve north of Lo Piano. The biggest threat on Hayden Butte is the highly flammable Buffel grass. In previous years, Stinknet was widespread in Lo Piano. Due to the dry season last winter, there was less areas covered in the highly invasive annual. Further north in Papago Preserve next to Evelyn Hallman Park and behind the water dept. in a revegetated area, there was an irrigation problem that proliferated the growth of Stinknet in large patches. Luckily the healthy growth of brittle bush helped to control the spread by shading it out. Kim has removed the Stinknet manually from Evelyn Hallman Park in 2019 & 2020. No Stinknet was found in the park in 2021. If the city had time and bodies to remove the invasive species, it would make a difference.

Agenda Item 4 – Commission Goals

Craig Hayton provided a summary of the work by the Commission to further develop their goals. Craig talked through four different goals as part of last year's report process.

- Identify and establish partnerships.
- Increase awareness through education.
- Participate in planning and design efforts.
- Identify appropriate uses and prioritize needs.

Commission Goals outlined in prior meetings:

1. Identify and establish partnerships.
 - Historic Preservation
 - Audubon Bird Society- (What is in the preserve)
 - Service and Rotary Clubs/Organizations (Kiwanis)
 - Tempe Chamber (business community)
 - Tempe Leadership/Tempe Cares
 - ASU (present in preserve)
 - SRP (present in preserve)
 - Sustainability Commission
 - Arizona Valley Forward
 - Churches (help with homelessness)
 - Care 7
 - Schools
 - Transportation Commission
 - Volunteers – (Site Stewart Program)
 - Recreation community
2. Increase awareness through education.
 - Have Resolution R2021.08 spark ideas
 - Stewardship idea

- Information in water bill
- Loma del Rio needs work for education (signage is old and readable)
- Riparian areas
- Interruptive programs – Preserve Manager
- Tempe 11 (suggest different programs)
- Maps that outlined and described the parameters of the preserve, connections points or links off the maps to other areas
- Technology - such as the use of cell phones
- Hike into history
- Historical and traditional uses of area and honor those uses
- Data gathered to learn about native plants, species. How we conserve and remove the ones that are not native. Why native plants are so important.

3. Participate in planning and design efforts.

- Include recreation community
- Identify preserve users
- Tribal/indigenous communities
- Neighborhood associations
- County island community
- Parks police
- Parks maintenance
- Salt River Project – SRP
- Arizona State University – ASU
- Secondary education

Craig worked with the Commission to identify appropriate uses and prioritize needs that may be outside code but would be appropriate uses, such as mountain biking. He talked about planning as plans but include budgetary discussion. When looking at the design process, what should the role of the commission be? Identify the commission expectations for this initiative.

4. Identify appropriate uses and prioritize needs

- Identify appropriate uses
- Removal of invasive species
- Increase the use of native plants

Participate in planning and design efforts (Commission Members).

- Plans: within and outside preserves
- Budget: CIP, O&M and Grants
- Design: within preserves
 - Within preserves – Mgmt. Plan
 - Representation on planning committee/s
 - Receive updates/provide input
 - Outside preserves – CA1 Plan
 - Receive information/updates/provide input
 - Which ones?
 - CA-1, Climate Action Plan, General Plan 2050, Historic Preservation Plan
- Planning efforts (budget)

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- Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
 - Input during August/October meetings
 - Operations & Maintenance (O&M)
 - Input during October/December meetings
 - Grants
 - Various: input throughout the year
 - Neighborhood grants
 - Design efforts (within preserves)
 - Commission representative on design team
 - Updates/input during meetings

Shereen Lerner asked that this presentation be sent out to the commission. Donald Burt asked to include increase of use of native plants and removal of invasive species. Kim indicated commission could email Craig with concerns for item four and that the commission then go over the list of concerns and decide what to add. Craig will agenize item four to discuss further. Commissioners to send Craig an email with their respective lists.

Agenda Item 5 – Meeting Options and Updates

Craig Hayton provided a brief overview on the status of in-person meetings.

As of last Friday, the city has reevaluated Council meetings in person. It is being reevaluated on a month-to-month basis. We are going to let Mayor and Council lead to meet in person. If they meet in Sept., we will then meet in Oct. We will leave meeting in-person as a potential option and provide hybrid options moving forward.

Agenda Item 6 – Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Craig Hayton provided an update on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. At the July 1 regular council meeting Mayor and Council formally adopted the plan. It was a two-year process. Thank you to Commission Members that participated in the process.

- Adopted on July 1, 2021
- StoryMap (primary format)
- Refined PDF version (secondary format)
- Included an executive summary
- Updated pictures, maps, charts & level of services
- Implementation planning progress.

Agenda Item 7 – Operational Items

- Moeur Park ramada project
- Late spring/early summer pruning
- Monsoon storms/erosion
- Fall volunteer projects

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

- 2022 Commission Calendar
- 2021 Annual Report

- 2022 Commission Officers
- Full discussion about Commission Goals

Agenda Item 9 – Upcoming Public Meetings & Announcements

- Next meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 5 at 3:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Prepared by: Tanya Chavez, Senior Management Assistant, (480) 858-2215

Reviewed by: Craig Hayton, Deputy Community Services Director- Parks and Recreation,
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